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Continued in Office

President-elect Nixon has followed an example set eight years ago by John F. Kennedy and has announced that the directors of the Federal Bureau of Intelligence and of the Central Intelligence Agency will continue in their present posts in the new administration. The FBI director, of course, is the same J. Edgar Hoover whom Mr. Kennedy kept in office. The CIA chief in 1960 was Allen W. Dulles; there has been a turnover in that office and the present director is Richard Helms.

Mr. Kennedy's action eight years ago, and now Mr. Nixon's, underscores the point that these two security posts are, and should be, nonpolitical and hence should not necessarily follow the political coloration of each administration. Mr. Hoover, indeed, has been in office so many years—since 1924—that he has long since risen above the two-party system. It was unthinkable, for many practical reasons, that Mr. Nixon would want to replace him now. But Mr. Hoover will be 74 on January 1 and common sense suggests that the question of his replacement must soon be considered.

Mr. Helms, so far as the public knows, has done his work well at the CIA. The principal guide the public has to go on is that he has kept out of the headlines and out of the range of the television microphones, as the chief of the CIA should. He is spoken of in Washington as a professional of high competence, a judgment in which Mr. Nixon seems to join.

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